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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 000252

SIPDIS

NOFORN

DEPT FOR DS/IPA/ITA AND DS/IP/NEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: X6

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE (SEPQ)

REF: SECSTATE 28688

Classified By: R.FORD, CHARGE FOR REASONS 1.4 (b, c and d)

1. (S/NF) Manama reports no significant changes from the previous SEPQ of September 10, 2003. The threat environment for Bahrain and the region remains a significant concern for the EAC. The movement of terrorists and equipment from Saudi Arabia into Bahrain across the causeway poses the greatest threat to the Embassy, NAVCENT and Bahrain.

The following answers are keyed to reftel:

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

1. (SBU) DEMONSTRATIONS

- 1A. Yes
- 1B. Yes
- 1C. Yes
- 1D. 1,000-2,500
- 1E. Anti-American demonstrations are usually triggered by US Military Action or US Foreign Policy in the Arab world.
- 1F. In the last 12 months, demonstrations have, at times, become violent. Most notably during the first four days of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) when demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy became violent. The first day of demonstrations saw the demonstrators detonate seven gas cylinders 300 meters from the Embassy. Rock throwing and physical assault against police officers were observed by Embassy officers. Police fired 60 plus tear gas canisters in an attempt to disperse the crowd. The demonstrators did leave the area after four hours of assaults against police positions that were protecting the Embassy.
- 1G. No
- 1H. No, not in the last 12 months.
- 1I. Yes. There have been anti-government demonstrations in the last twelve months concerning democratic reform and unemployment issues.
- 1J. No
- 1K. 500-4,000
- 1L. Peaceful for the most part. Small segments of teenagers within the larger group violently engage passersby and police.
- 1M. No

2. (C) MACRO CONFLICT CONDITIONS

- 1A. There are no current interstate or intrastate conflicts in Bahrain. However, Shi'a dissatisfaction remains an area of concern and deeply motivated by the government's (Sunni) inability to deliver on political reform promises. The Embassy is closely monitoring Bahrain's political reforms and the populations' reactions.
- 1B. Primarily in Manama and northern Bahrain.
- 1C. Yes
- 1D. Yes. Both the Sunni and Shi'a sects have demonstrated anti-Americanism in the past. Anti-Americanism is not endemic in Bahrain and is usually demonstrated in response to some USG foreign policy position or military action. For example, during OIF, four anti-American protests took place outside the walls of the Embassy.

3. (C) HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

- 1A. Yes. Law enforcement agencies are professional, reasonably well trained and responsive.
- 1B. Yes. Post is in the second year of a three year ATA training program with the Ministry of Interior and National Security Agency. So far, training provided by ATA and DOD has been very well received and noticeably increased the skill level of the Bahrain police, security agency and military.
- 1C. No
- 1D. Yes
- 1E. Yes
- 1F. Yes. The Bahrain National Security Agency (BNSA) has made several significant arrests in the last twelve months. In February 2003 the BNSA arrested five Bahraini men suspected of planning a terrorist attack against westerners. Two were convicted of possessing illegal firearms and sentenced to jail, but the other three were released because of lack of

evidence to support a prosecution. Bahrain's lack of a conspiracy law prevents the Government from arresting, trying and convicting terrorists before they can put plans into action. The BNSA arrested an Iraqi intelligence agent in March 2003 after he set off a small explosive device near the US Naval Support Activity in Bahrain. The security services have also detained/arrested 50 other individuals known to have ties to Al-Qaida.

- 1G. Yes
- 1H. Very good
- 1I. Average
- 1J. Average

INDIGENOUS TERRORISM

14. (C) ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST GROUPS

- 1A. Yes
- 1B. 3 Groups. Hizballah, Al-Qaida and The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain.
- 1C. No
- 1D. N/A
- 1E. No
- 1F. No
- 1G. Country-Wide
- 1H. N/A

15. (C) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

- 1A. No
- 1B. N/A
- 1C. No
- 1D. N/A
- 1E. N/A

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

16. (S/NF) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS

- 1A. Yes. Hizballah and Al-Qaida have a known presence in country.
- 1B. The cells have operational, financial and support presence in Bahrain. Hizballah flags fly at every anti-US demonstration.
- 1C. No
- 1D. No
- 1E. Yes. Although Bahrain is well known as a moderate country, it is nonetheless an Islamic country. Hizballah, Al-Qaida and other Islamic terrorist groups proclaiming resistance to the United States' presence in the region have generated some sympathies. This does not however, necessarily translate into a call to arms.
- 1F. The EAC is aware of this presence and is particularly concerned with the Iranians. There has been IRGC surveillance of US military facilities in the past, but none reported recently. The EAC is also aware and concerned about a Chinese trade office located 30 meters from the Embassy parking lot. There is no information linking these hostile intelligence services to potential anti-American terrorist acts.
- 1G. Although weapons are illegal in Bahrain, the EAC is concerned about past and present indicators of weapons availability. In February 2003, five militants who were known to be targeting Americans were arrested with four AK-47/AK-74 rifles and over 1000 rounds of ammunition. Recently in Saudi Arabia, there have been numerous seizures of weapons by the authorities. In one instance, combined with a Saudi government weapons seizure was the arrest of two Bahraini men whose intentions are still unknown. This area is of special concern to the EAC as Bahrain is a mere 24 kilometers from Saudi Arabia and at best 10% of the 5,000 vehicles which enter Bahrain daily from Saudi Arabia are searched.

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